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The Conflict of Pursuing Peace in an Unjust World: A Comparative Study of Monotheistic Religions

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Abstract

The pursuit of peace amidst prevailing injustice stands as one of the greatest challenges in religious, political and philosophical history of humanity. Among the monotheistic tradition (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), peace is considered as a divine ideal; and a moral order intended by Almighty for human society. Nonetheless, it is an indisputable fact among these religions that the social world is stained by violence, oppression, corruption and inequalities that can undermine the ideal of attaining peace. This has created a distinct conflict raising imperative questions like: can we attain peace without justice? Or conversely does peace morally require conflict? Whether it is incumbent on believers to resist injustice at the cost of disturbing social order? The current study endeavors to maintain that monotheistic religions conceptualize peace as justice-oriented, morally substantive condition rather than mere absence of conflict. True peace requires an active pursuit of justice; and believers are morally compelled to confront injustice– even if it resulted into a rift. The introductory section of this paper shall define the core conflict; and will provide theoretical framework for peace, justice and moral tension. The next three sections will analyze the perspective of war and peace in each monotheistic religion (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) separately. The fifth section will compare, analyze the shared theological similarities and distinct approaches present in each religion. The paper will be concluded by asserting that peace is considered as both an eschatological promise and eschatological hope that believers can attain if they stand firm to their religions respectively.

Keywords: systemic injustice, *Shalom*, *Jihād*, peace-justice conflict, Just War Theory, eschatological promise, monotheism, pacifism

Introduction

The central moral challenge faced by is to pursue peace humanity in an unjust world. Although monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) preach peace as a divine ideal, yet they didn't ignored the harsh realities of prevailing injustice, violence and oppression. This creates an imperative tension as to how believers can seek peace in the face of injustice that may require resistance?

1.1. Defining the Conflict

The core conflict of the current study is sub-divided into two competing moral imperatives:

i. The call for peace promoting non-violence, harmony, reconciliation and forgiveness;

ii. The demand for justice to stand against oppression, resisting evil and protecting the vulnerable.

For monotheistic religions, peace and justice are two sides opposing forces that must be attained which often requires struggle.

1.2. Theoretical Framework: Peace, Justice and Moral Tension

It is mandatory to identify the core conflict that is embedded at the heart of the current argument. Peace is conceptually understood as harmony devoid of any conflict and social cohesion; whereas, justice means moral responsibility to act fairly and accountability of wrong-doings. However, in the prevailing unjust world, these contrasting values combat against one another causing tension. This leads monotheistic traditions into an unavoidable dilemma where peace and justice seems inseparable. We live in a world where peace may have to tolerate injustice; and justice may require disrupting peace. All religious traditions are inclined towards the view that justice must prevail at all cost even if it shatters peace. Let's discuss monotheistic traditions in separate sections to justify this claim.

2. Judaism: *Shalom* through Justice

In Judaism, the relationship between peace and justice is well-defined. The concept of *Shalom* (peace, communal well-being),[1] in Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh*), is rooted in righteousness.[2] The religion does not endorse the illusion of peace by ignoring prevailing injustice in the society. "Because they lead my people astray, saying, "Peace," when there is no peace, and because, when a flimsy wall is built, they cover it with whitewash."[3] Likewise, prophet Jeremiah (650-570 BC) condemns leaders and corrupted elites who elude people with the sense of 'false peace.' "'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace."[4] This critique became central and integral part of Jewish moral ethics that denotes that 'peace that protects injustice is not peace– it is moral failure.'[5] In similar vein, various Hebrew prophets (like Amos [814-740 BC], Isaiah [8th century BC], Micah [740-670 BC])[6] urges that in order to flourish true peace, one should confront corruption, extortion, exploitation and unequal distribution of wealth that destroys the harmonious balance of a society.

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[1] *Shalom* is derived from Hebrew *šālōm* meaning peace. It is also used as Jewish salutations (at meeting or departure) akin to *Salam* (Arabic origin Salutations for Muslims). The deeper meaning of *Shalom* also includes: wholeness, integrity and harmony rooted in righteousness.

[2] Georges Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* Vol. 5 (Boston: Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, 2021), 4.

[3] "Ezekiel 13:10," *Bible Hub.* 2004, https://biblehub.com/ezekiel/13-10.htm (accessed February 4, 2025).

[4] "Jeremiah 6:14," In *Holy Bible, New International Version* (Biblica.Inc, 1973).

[5] Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, 5.

[6] According to *Talmud*, there are 46 prophets in Jewish tradition. "Ancient Jewish History: List of Jewish Prophets," *American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise*, 1998, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/list-of-jewish-prophets (accessed February 18, 2025).

As opposed to deceptive peace, true peace cannot be maintained by mere calmness. Sometimes this interruption could be harsh or disruptive.[7] Judaism doesn't endorse violence, but they accept its inevitability in resisting oppression and defending the vulnerable. According to *Exodus* narrative (mentioned in 2nd book of *Old Testament*), sometimes struggle and combat against injustice remains the only viable solution to restore peace.[8] Thus, attaining peace is an ideal, in Jewish tradition, which is possible by committing whole-heartedly to the pursuit of justice.[9]

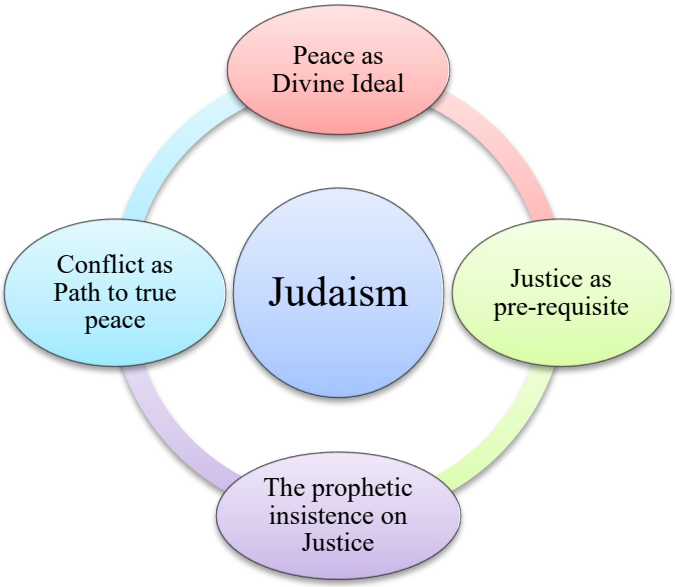

Figure 1. *Shalom* through Justice in Jewish Tradition

If peace is a divine ideal then justice is divine imperative, hence in Jewish tradition both are inseparable. "Pursue justice, and justice alone, so that you may live, and you may possess the land that the Lord (your God) is giving you."[10] In another verse: "This is what the LORD says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for My salvation is coming soon, and My righteousness will be revealed."[11]

[7]"They devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys." Joshua 6:21, https://www.biblestudytools.com/joshua/6-21.html; Also See David L. Perry, *Ethics and War in Comparative Religious Perspective* (U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Policy And Strategy, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2006), 33.

[8]"Exodus," *Bible Hub,* (2004), https://biblehub.com/exodus/23-6.htm (accessed January 31, 2025), that contains narrative of liberation, regulative wars and defensive conflict.

[9]Jonathan Gray, "Justice (Tzedek) — A Tri-Literal Root," *The Herald of Christ Kingdon.* 2019, https://herald-magazine.com/2019/11/01/justice-tzedek-a-tri-literal-root/ (accessed February 6, 2025), Justice (*mishpat* and *tzedek*) is described as fairness, moral action and righteousness.

[10]*Deuteronomy* 16:20, (2004), https://biblehub.com/deuteronomy/16-20.htm (accessed February 3, 2025).

[11]"Isaiah 56:1," *Bible Hub,* (2004), https://biblehub.com/isaiah/56-1.htm (accessed February 3, 2025).

In Hebrew Bible, 'justice' is considered as a pre-requisite to peace instead of a separable ideal. It is a covenant that command society to be fair and just to individuals: protecting strangers and ensuring the welfare of poor, widows and orphans. Judaism doesn't glorify violence, but it acknowledges that:

- Deliverance from oppression may require struggle (for e.g. Moses demolishes slavery in Egypt)[12];
- Defending society from aggression is morally justified under strict limits.
- Prophets often confront kings creating socio-political tension (e.g. between Moses and Pharaoh)

This means that in Jewish tradition, peace requires justice; and justice may require confrontation. Additionally, Jewish ethics relating to war focus on issues like legitimation and conduct. "The *Talmud* classifies wars according to their source of legitimation. Biblically mandated wars are termed mandatory. Wars undertaken at the discretion of the Sanhedrin are termed discretionary."[13] Based on aforementioned boundaries, Jewish wars are divided into sub-categories– including mandatory wars (commanded by God), discretionary wars, reactive defensive wars (including pre-emptive wars) and expansionary wars.[14]

However, the commands of *Talmud* on defensive wars (to wage war to defend people, feels threatened if some other nation is taking over its territory) are obscured.[15] The scripture does not clarify what constitutes as infringement of land and leave it to the hands of those in power– likely to end in abuse of power in the name of religion. Furthermore, Jewish perspective of war should be toned down according to contemporary moral standards. But in spite of having Israel Defense Force (IDF) Code, Israel violates them in Palestine and Lebanon.[16] Probably, the conflict between Jewish perspectives of war is because Rabbinic and Hebrew Bible depends on theoretical speculation, codification and commentary.[17] For instance Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (also known as Rashi [1050-1105]), a commentator on rabbinic text, fused two different texts from (*Psalm* 111:6) and (*Genesis* 1) to justify wars of conquests, instead of starting from first verse of Exodus.[18] He further limited categories of wars into mandatory and discretionary wars. In similar vein, Moses ben Maimon (1135–1204), (also known as Maimonides), rationalize the biblical text.[19] Unfortunately, this obscurity and challenges to translating ancient text is beyond the scope of this paper.

[12]"Exodus," *Bible Hub,* (2004), https://biblehub.com/exodus/23-6.htm (accessed January 31, 2025); Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* 7.

[13]Reuven Kimelman, "Judaism and the Ethics of War," in Margo Kitts, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Religion and War* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 215.

[14]Kimelman, "Judaism and the Ethics of War," 215-238; Laila Brence, "War in Monotheistic Religions – Judaism," August 08, 2017, https://hibamagazine.com/war-in-monotheistic-religions-judaism/ (accessed February 1, 2025).

[15]Shijun Liu, and Bruce Lusignan, "The Ethics of War in Religion and What Needs to be Understood for Peacekeeping in the Middle East," (Stanford University Press, 2002), 1-10, https://web.stanford.edu/class/e297a/Ethics%20of%20War%20in%20Religion.htm

[16]David L. Perry, *Ethics and War in Comparative Religious Perspective,* 34.

[17]Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* 23.

[18]Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* 24-25.

[19]Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* 25.

3. Christianity: Between Radical Peace and Just Resistance

In Christianity, Jesus Christ preaches love, mercy, non-violence, reconciliation, and transformation.[20] *The Sermons of the Mount* urges to love your enemies to the extent that "If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also."[21] Acting as peacemakers led to a certain form of radical pacifism in early Christianity where there is no place for violence and political revolt.[22] Early believers of Christianity, prior to Constantine the Great (272-337 AD), were strict practitioners of pacifism and refused military services. The relationship with violence and war was altered under Constantine reign.[23]

However, this pacifism led to practical challenges regarding non-violence policies when confronting exportation, tyranny and oppression. On the contrary, Realists approach to warfare is that there are no moral boundaries for wars. They argued that what can be legitimate about killing and massacre? They resist offering moral codes within war by arguing that it is factual that war is hell where laws are usually silent and everything is fair… Although born in different centuries and era– Thucydides (459-402 BCE)[24], Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527)[25] and Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)[26] and are all proponents of realists' perspective of war. They argued that war is not only vicious and brutal, but also inevitable. So, the only practical thing is to do it swiftly and quickly to restore peace.[27] In response to systemic injustice in the world, Just War Theory provides a middle ground between pacifism and realism. The Just War theory is attributed to Cicero of Rome (106-43 BCE),[28] St. Ambrose of Milan (339-397 AD) and St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD).[29]"Augustine asserts that war is just when it is fought to punish sinners or return the world

[20]Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* 43.

[21](Matthew 5-7, 1973)

[22]Paul Middleton, "Early Christinaity and War," in Margo Kitts, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Religion and War*, 52. There was also a debate in Christianity that whether Jesus Christs was an absolute pacifist or not owing to different translations and anecdotes in Gospel. David L. Perry, *Ethics and War in Comparative Religious Perspective,* 34-35; however, due to limited scope of this paper we cannot go into detail of this subject.

[23]Perry, *Ethics and War in Comparative Religious Perspective,* 71.

[24]Arnold Wycombe Gomme, "Thucydides: Greek Historian," *Britannica* 2023, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thucydides-Greek-historian (accessed February 18, 2025).

[25]Harvey Mansfield, "Niccolò Machiavelli: Italian Statesman and Writer," *Britannica* 2022, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Niccolo-Machiavelli (accessed January 29, 2025).

[26]Tom Sorell, "Thomas Hobbes: English Philoospher," *Britannica,* 2021, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Hobbes (accessed January 29, 2025).

[27]Benjamin Elkins, "Practical Just War: St. Augustine and His Framing of Just War Theory," *Discentes: Penn's Classical Studies Publication.* October 13, 2024, https://web.sas.upenn.edu/discentes/2024/10/13/practical-just-war-st-augustine-his-framing-of-just-war-theory/#:~:text=That%20is%2C%20Augustine%20asserts%20that,harmony%20between%20man%20and%20God. (accessed March 3, 2025).

[28]Cicero (106BC-43BC) was the first to use the termed 'just war' but he did not develop the Just War Theory. See Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* 46.

[29]Although, Just War Theory is associated with St Augustine (354-430 AD) but it was Saint Ambrose (339–397 AD) who developed the concept. However, Ambrose' thought was scattered throughout his works and Augustine discussed it in detail. [James Turner Johnson, "The Idea of Just War in Christian Thought from the Age of Augustine through the Early Modern Period," in *The Cambridge Companion to Religion and War*, 241].

back to a state of peace. This peace is twofold: the harmony of the body and soul within man and the harmony between man and God."[30]

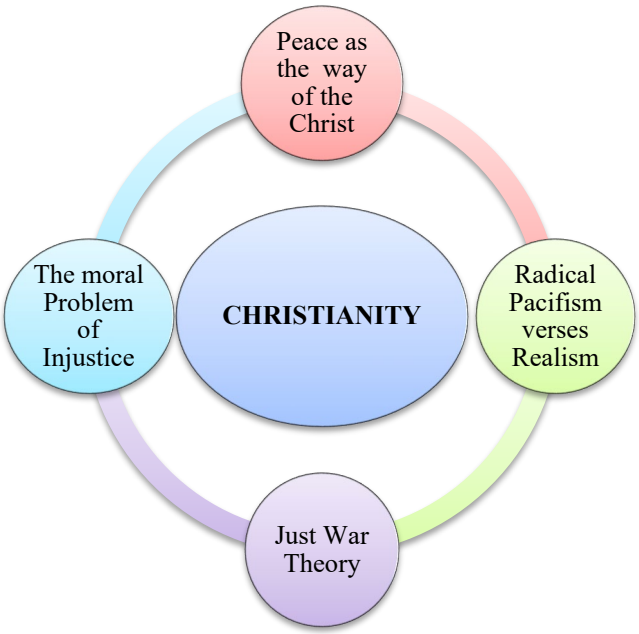
Peace as the way of the Christ
The moral Problem of Injustice
CHRISTIANITY
Radical Pacifism verses Realism
Just War Theory

Figure 2. Peace-Justice Tension in Christian Tradition

The doctrine is divided into two sub-categories: *Jus ad Bellum* (the morally right cause s behind declaring war); and *jus in Bello* (the ethical code of conducting war).[31] According to Just War Theory, violence is not likable but permissible under restricted guidelines to restore true peace, protecting innocents and in self-defense.[32] The ethical guidelines of warfare like: distinction between combatants and non-combatants, proportionality, right intention and legitimate authority strongly affirms that force is a necessary evil that can be only used to ensure peace and justice fulfilling divine law. Conversely, wars for personal gain, ego and vendetta; or any other ill-intention transgressed the moral limits; and are impermissible. In fact, both parties should genuinely endeavor to seek a non-violent way to resolve conflict.[33] Right intention is the heart of the quest whether a certain war is just or sinful. Through this corrective form of war, Augustine made it harder for pacifists to condemn war.[34]

[30]Benjamin Elkins, "Practical Just War: St. Augustine and His Framing of Just War Theory," *Discentes: Penn's Classical Studies Publication.* October 13, 2024, https://web.sas.upenn.edu/discentes/2024/10/13/practical-just-war-st-augustine-his-framing-of-just-war-theory/#:~:text=That%20is%2C%20Augustine%20asserts%20that,harmony%20between%20man%20and%20God. (accessed March 3, 2025).

[31]Elkins, "Practical Just War: St. Augustine and His Framing of Just War Theory."

[32]Liu, and Lusignan, "The Ethics of War In Religion," 2.

[33]Liu, and Lusignan, "The Ethics of War In Religion, 3.

[34]Elkins, "Practical Just War: St. Augustine and His Framing of Just War Theory."

Afterwards, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) further developed this concept "De bello" in his *Summa Theologica II, ii question 40*, which is now being used in Modern Western moral thought.[35] However, other versions include 'just peace' by integrating ethical guidelines to just war theory after the horrors of WWII.[36]

4. Islam: Peace through Justice and Moral Struggle

Like Jewish tradition, Islamic concept of peace is also tied to moral struggle to attain justice. Etymologically, the word 'Islam' is rooted from an Arabic diction '*salam*' that means peace and '*islam*' submission to Allah. Conversely, the religion Islam is known as the religion of peace where true peace is achieved via submitting to divine order ordained by Allah. Islam too conceptualizes peace as an active ideal (rather than passive) that brings harmony under Divine justice.[37]

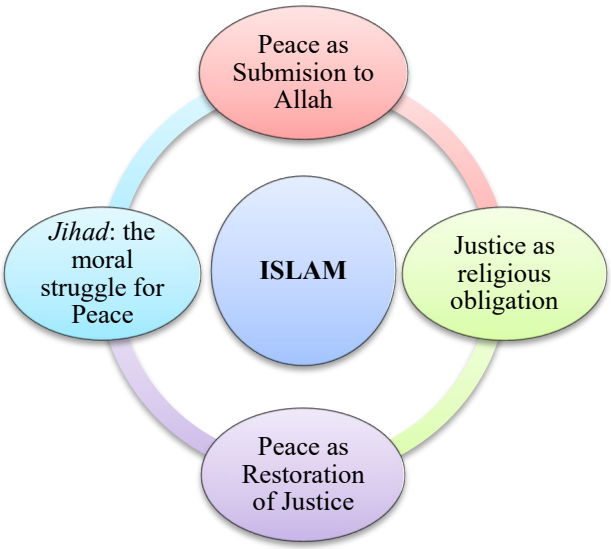
Peace as Submision to Allah
Jihad: the moral struggle for Peace
ISLAM
Justice as religious obligation
Peace as Restoration of Justice

Figure 3. Peace through Justice in Qur'ānic Teachings

In addition, justice is not only an integral path to Peace, but also religious obligation as a Muslim. "Indeed, Allah commands you to return trusts to their rightful owners;1 and when you judge between people, judge with fairness. What a noble commandment from Allah to you! Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing."[38] In other verses of the Qur'ān, Allah's commands Muslims to

[35]Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* 51; Thomas Aquinas, "Thomas Aquinas: Summa Theologica II, ii Question 40," *History of Western Philosophy.* 2023 [1265-1273], https://www.tamathemata.org/class-notes/the-university-of-paris/thomas-aquinas-summa-theologiae-ii-ii-question-40 (accessed February 11, 2025); Robert Pasnau, "Thomas Aquinas," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* December 7, 2022, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aquinas/ (accessed February 12, 2025).

[36]"This aspect is also strongly emphasized by Richard Harries, Anglican Bishop of Oxford (1987–2006), in his criticism of the British government regarding the legitimacy of the 2003 Iraq war." Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* 66-67.

[37]Asma Afsaruddin, Fighting and Martial Valor in Islamic Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Religion and War,* 79.

[38]Al- Qur'ān: An-Nisa 4:58.

be just and righteous: "O believers! Stand firm for Allah and bear true testimony. Do not let the hatred of a people lead you to injustice. Be just! That is closer to righteousness. And be mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do."[39]

Similarly, the following verse entails that justice is not merely important for political domain, but also important for establishing peace and equitable social order. "Indeed, Allah commands justice, grace, as well as generosity to close relatives. He forbids indecency, wickedness, and aggression. He instructs you so perhaps you will be mindful."[40] Unlike Judaism, the commands in Qur'ān regarding war are quite distinct and clear as to how it ought to be conducted.[41] For the first 12 years of preaching, the prophet Muhammad practiced pacifism and non-violence in spite of enduring atrocities and hardships by the people of Mecca.[42] It was in Medina (622 AH), that Allah permitted Muslims to *Jihād* in self-defense.

4.1. Jihād– the Moral Struggle of Peace-justice Conflict

The understanding of *jihād* is the peak comprehension into the moral struggle of Muslims in Islam. "O Prophet! Struggle (*Jihād*) against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be firm with them. Hell will be their home. What an evil destination!"[43] *Jihād* has multiple types in Islam, but main two divisions are the greater *Jihād* and the lesser *Jihād*:

1) The greater *Jihād* refers to spiritual struggle (inner) to seek inner peace against one's own weaknesses, harmful desires and vices.

2) the lesser *Jihād* refers to strictly regulated physical struggle (outer) that is permitted under three circumstances, i.e., i) in defense of a community; ii) protecting the oppressed; and iii) resisting persecution.[44]

The most crucial element in the study of *Jihād* is the comprehension of ethical guidelines for warfare. These guidelines include– prohibit aggression and to avoid harming civilians (especially women, children and elderly); refrain from damaging and destroying property (or non-military resources); or waging war for territorial gain.[45] The Islamic ethics also guides to avoid harming or burning trees; and clergy men who have led their entire life in monastic services.[46] Allah proclaimed in the holy Qur'ān:

> Fight in the cause of Allah ˹only˺ against those who wage war against you, but do not exceed the limits.1 Allah does not like transgressors. Kill them wherever you come upon them and drive them out of the places from which they have driven you out. For persecution is far worse than killing. And do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque unless they attack you there. If they do so, then fight them—that is the reward of the disbelievers. But if they cease, then surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Fight

[39] Al-Mai'da 05:8.
[40] An-Nahal 16:90.
[41] Liu, and Lusignan, "The Ethics of War In Religion," 4.
[42] Perry, *Ethics and War in Comparative Religious Perspective,* 37.
[43] At-Tahrim 66:69.
[44] Asma Afsaruddin, "Fighting and Martial Valor in Islamic Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Religion and War,* 80-81.
[45] Celal Emanet, "The Ethics of the Conquest, War and Peace: A Study of the Early Islamic History," *The Journal of International Social Research* 7, no. 31 (2007): 325.
[46] Liu, and Lusignan, "The Ethics of War In Religion," 5.

against them ˹if they persecute you˺ until there is no more persecution, and ˹your˺ devotion will be to Allah ˹alone˺. If they stop ˹persecuting you˺, let there be no hostility except against the aggressors.[47]

Understanding peace-justice conflict in this manner enable us to visualize that 'peace' comprised of both inner and outer moral struggle– in spiritual sense it's a personal struggle for moral purity; and in political sense it's an outward social link to maintain justice.[48] Misunderstanding or misrepresenting the concept of *Jihād* has led to criticism from western lobbies and encouraged Islamophobia.[49] Oppression and tyranny is seen as disruption of divine moral order, so it must be confronted ethically to restore true peace. The foundation of Islam is built upon the concept of peace that is attained by cultivating inner moral discipline; resisting oppression through *Jihād* and establishing justice.[50] Additionally, this holistic bond between peace, submission to Allah and justice is ordained alongside strict ethical guidelines of warfare to regulate conduct. This entails that although restoring peace is the ultimate goal, but paving its path is only possible through maintaining justice.

5. Comparative Analysis: Shared Principles and Distinct Approaches

Let's summarize the overlapping and shared principles in monotheistic tradition:

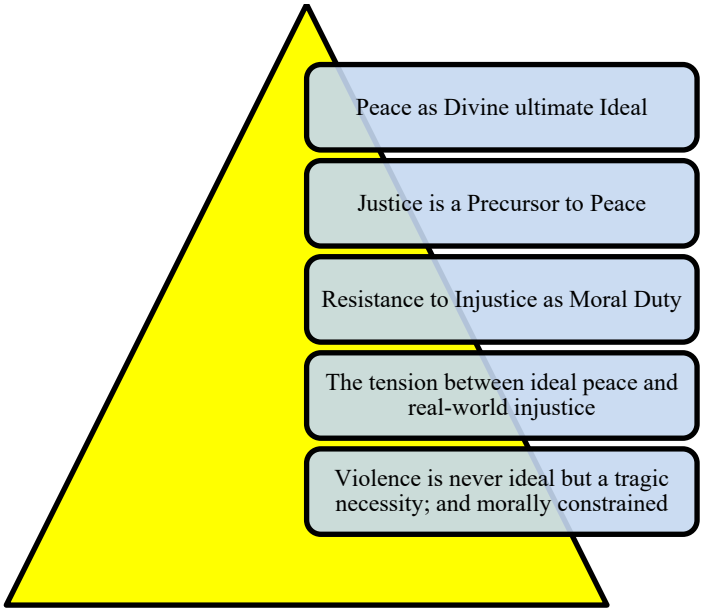
Peace as Divine ultimate Ideal
Justice is a Precursor to Peace
Resistance to Injustice as Moral Duty
The tension between ideal peace and real-world injustice
Violence is never ideal but a tragic necessity; and morally constrained

Figure 4. Shared theological themes in Monotheistic Religions relating to War

[47]Al-Baqarah 02:190-193.

[48]Asma Afsaruddin, "Fighting and Martial Valor in Islamic Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Religion and War,* 93.

[49]"Islamic holy wars were never supposed to be total wars involving indiscriminate killing and scorched-earth tactics, in spite of what the leaders of Al Qaeda, Hamas, or Hizbollah might say to the contrary." Perry, *Ethics and War in Comparative Religious Perspective,* 38.

[50]Fait A. Muedini, "Teaching "Islam and Human Rights" in the Classroom," *American Political Science Association* 45, no. 1 (2012): 101-105.

5.1. The Dilemma of pursing Peace in an unjust World across Monotheism

It should be noted that the perspective of war is mentioned in holy Scriptures of Judaism and Islam, but it is absent in prophetic teachings of Christianity. The view was later developed by Saints.[51] On the other hand, the perspective of war dealt in Judaism is different than the perspective in Islam. This is because while Islamic perspective is strictly religious in nature, whereas, the Jewish perspective is more ethnic and born out of speculation by theologians and translators (as already discussed).[52] Similarly, "the just war and the *Jihād* are analogues, in that they share certain moral concerns, in particular with respect to the presumption that war stands in need of justification and limitation - in effect, "governance."[53]"It was also put forth by Muhammad Legenhausen in his *Islam and Just War Theory* to articulate his concept of 'Islamic just war pacifism.'[54]

The following differences (in Fig. 5) depict how each religion navigates political authority, conflicts and social justice movements.

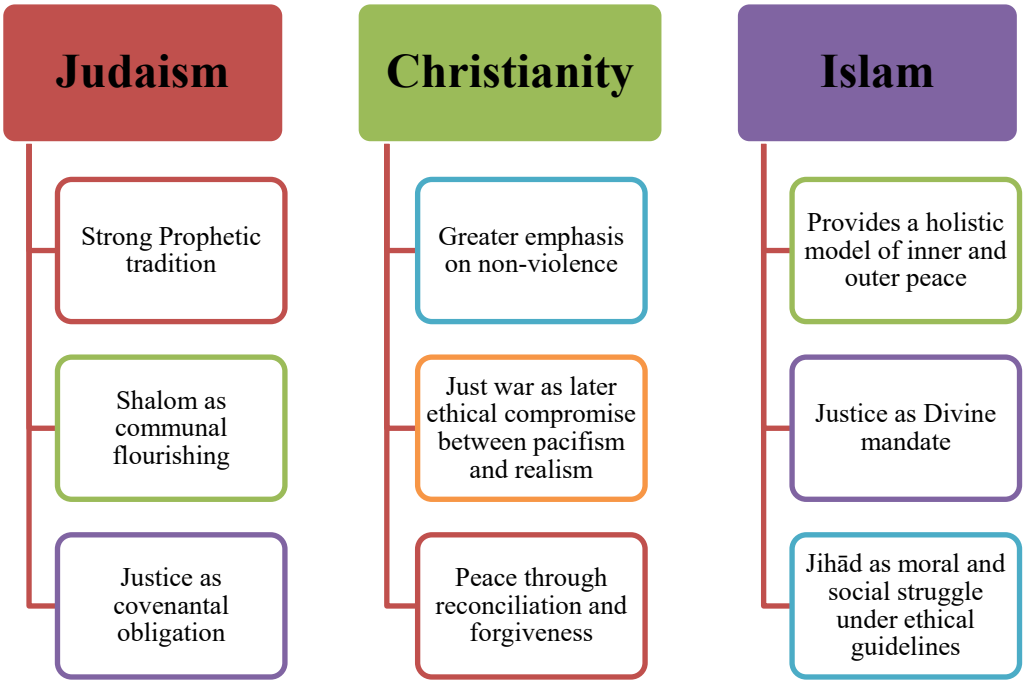
Judaism
Strong Prophetic tradition
Shalom as communal flourishing
Justice as covenantal obligation
Christianity
Greater emphasis on non-violence
Just war as later ethical compromise between pacifism and realism
Peace through reconciliation and forgiveness
Islam
Provides a holistic model of inner and outer peace
Justice as Divine mandate
Jihād as moral and social struggle under ethical guidelines

Figure 5. Differences to approach perspective of war in monotheistic Religions

[51]John Kelsay, "Religion, Morality, and the Governance of War: The Case of Classical Islam," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 18, no. 02 (1990): 136.

[52]Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* 29-30.

[53]Kelsay, "Religion, Morality, and the Governance of War: The Case of Classical Islam," 123-139.

[54]Muhammad Legenhausen, "Islam and Just War Theory," *Qom* (The Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, February 2008), https://al-islam.org/articles/islam-and-just-war-theory-muhammad-legenhausen

5.2. Ethical Implications for the Modern World

The contemporary relevance of peace and justice in monotheistic religions includes:

- Anti-colonialism and Liberation Movements in South Asia, Middle-East and Africa often emerged from religious principles entailing that justice precedes peace. Many religious leaders criticized that what the western world called 'colonial peace' was in fact oppression.
- Modern human rights activism and resistance against oppression were mostly extracted from moral principles of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.[55] These includes: the anti-apartheid struggle, American civil right movements, contemporary advocacy for refugees, Hague and Geneva Convention.[56]
- Political abuse of religion can be resolved if given proper reading and comprehension to monotheistic scriptures and ethical regulations that rejects the misuse of religion to sanctify tyranny.[57] Unfortunately, there are religious fanatics, extremists and terrorists who try to justify their mandates of aggressive wars.[58] But they cannot substantiate their negative approach being backed by actual faith and Holy Scriptures.[59] As we have seen in previous sections that all monotheistic religions inclined towards peaceful co-existence; and tends to maintain ethical guidelines to conduct war if necessary.
- Interreligious peace-building and humanitarian cooperation requires conflict resolution with the help of inter-faith dialogues relating peace.

6. Peace as an Eschatological Promise

Monotheistic religions, like all other religions, believe in peaceful co-existence of humanity. They nurture the principles of love, toleration, mercy and to refrain from killing unjustly. Hence, they provide a vision of peace that is rooted in justice, righteousness and moral responsibility. This moral responsibility towards justice rejects superficial calm– conceptualizing that submission towards violence and oppression cannot settle peace. True peace requires courage to resist and struggle against evil and oppressive leaders. However, if believers of these religions strictly adhere to their outlined ethical principles to conduct war may help them to refrain from waging total war; and may help in reducing the severity of it.[60]

The practical aspect of war shows that no nation state, country or religion can achieve absolute peace in this world. The imperfection in human society and prevailing systemic injustice entails that justice will always remain incomplete; and peace will always be fragile. However, the eschatological hope allows believers to pursue justice by assuming that they can attain ideal peace by following their religions respectively.[61]

[55]Emanet, "The Ethics of the Conquest, War and Peace: A Study of the Early Islamic History," 325.
[56]David L. Perry, *Ethics and War in Comparative Religious Perspective,* 39.
[57]John J Collins, "Biblical Paradigms of War in History and Eschatology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Religion and War*, 44-47.
[58]This task remains challenging for moderate thinkers (Jews, Christians and Muslims alike) to counter terrorism and religious fundamentalism.
[59]Perry, *Ethics and War in Comparative Religious Perspective,* 38.
[60]Perry, *Ethics and War in Comparative Religious Perspective,* 39.
[61]Collins, "Biblical Paradigms of War in History and Eschatology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Religion and War*, 47.

Nonetheless, it is worth pondering that based on the current study; monotheistic religions are forming a conclusion that in order to pursue peace and serves justice, some sort of conflict, violence or war is permissible. But that would be appealing to relativism when the monotheistic religions clash one another. Consider the example of Jews violence against Muslims of Palestine:[62] each will plea their own case as both would believe that what they are doing is morally right and an obligatory duty from the perspective of their own religion. In such scenarios, how tyranny could be differentiated from maintaining divine order and restoring peace– remains a much debated and yet inconclusive quest of all times. Consequently, despite all the ethical guidelines of warfare, whenever war occurs, all religions transgressed and break boundaries set by their religious scriptures (be it Jews, Christians or Muslims). In addition to this, more often apparent religious conflicts have hidden political and personal agendas that have less to do with religion than propagated.[63] Hence, political abuse of religion is not only difficult to discern but also almost impossible to resolve (as we have seen in monotheistic religions). But attributing terrorism and fundamentalism to a particular religion alone is not only sheer biasedness but also propagation of mind-set for future generations. An endeavor, I leave for my future writings. Meanwhile, I encouraged readers to unbiasedly read every religion before tagging them with negativity; and rigorously indulge in inter-religious talks for peace.

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[62]Tamer, *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* 29.

[63]Brian Orend, “A Just-war Critique of Realism and Pacifism,” *Journal of Philosophical Research* 26 (2001): 435-477.

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